

make our Nation great in goodness and good in its greatness.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. CAPPS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HEALTH CARE CONSCIENCE RIGHTS ACT

(Mr. DAINES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, our Founders believed that conscience and religious rights occupied the highest rung on the civil liberty protection ladder. The Obama administration has fallen short of these expectations.

As a fifth-generation Montanan and a person of faith, I know that my faith does not begin and end at the doors of our church. Living the principles of what I believe is a key part of my faith.

But under the Affordable Care Act, religious institutions and employers, as well as health care providers who hold religious and moral convictions, are stripped of their religious freedoms. Religious institutions and employers are forced to pay for coverage of contraceptive methods. Health care providers do not have the protection to refuse to perform abortion services that they are morally opposed to. That is a violation of the First Amendment.

That is why I am proud to help introduce the Health Care Conscience Rights Act, which will uphold our constitutional rights of religious freedom and uphold our moral calling to practice life-affirming health care.

UPHOLDING VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, this weekend I joined a trip led by Congressman JOHN LEWIS to some of the landmark sites of the civil rights struggle, culminating in a walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the 48th anniversary of that historic march. The trip underscored the importance of the Voting Rights Act, which is responsible for much of the progress we have made toward eliminating voter discrimination, and the need for the Supreme Court to uphold section 5 of the law in the case pending before it.

Meanwhile, in Congress, we should be working to eliminate the inexcusably long lines at polling places across the country and ensure that every American who wants to cast a ballot is able to do so.

Decades ago, Congressman LEWIS helped lead the fight for the idea that all Americans should be able to participate in our democratic process. It is my hope that the Supreme Court and this Congress will honor that struggle in the years ahead.

SEQUESTER AND FEDERAL SPENDING

(Mr. BENTIVOLIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, before I came to Washington, I was a high school teacher. To be a good teacher, I had to make things understandable for my students in the classroom. With the budget, I knew that there had to be an easier way to explain the numbers I was looking at to the people who sent me to Washington. Thomas Jefferson once wrote that an informed public was vital to our continuing democracy. I would like to share with you how the sequester affects Federal spending.

Spending is expected to be around \$3.8 trillion; that's the number 38 followed by 11 zeros. The sequester is \$85 billion; that's the number 85 followed by nine zeros. That's a lot of money.

The best way to understand these numbers is to take eight zeros off of both of them. The President is complaining that we are taking an equivalent of \$850 from a budget of \$38,000. This is all pretty hypocritical after he forced hardworking Americans who actually have to live on \$38,000 a year to pay another \$760 or so in increased taxes as part of his fiscal cliff deal.

The people in my district want us to get serious about the enormous spending that's happening here in Congress. We should be able to have a reduction in the increase of spending without acting as if it will cause the end of the world.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS). The gentleman is reminded to avoid inappropriate references to the President.

SEQUESTRATION ISN'T A SOLUTION

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I visited Core Composites, a company located in Bristol in my home State of Rhode Island. Because of sequestration, this small business has been notified that funding for a government contract will be reduced by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I also recently met with Alexion, a pharmaceutical manufacturer in Rhode Island, whose FDA approval of a life-saving drug will likely be delayed because of sequestration. Countless other small businesses across our country are facing these same challenges today because Washington failed to take action to avoid sequestration.

Sequestration isn't a solution to our Federal deficit; it's a penalty that goes into effect because Republicans and Democrats failed to work together to responsibly reduce the deficit. And it's a penalty that will place a heavy toll on hardworking men and women across our country.

We spend a lot of time fighting in Washington. Now it's time for us to work together to reach a commonsense solution on this issue. Congressman CHRIS VAN HOLLEN has offered a very detailed alternative to sequestration that I'm proud to cosponsor that would cut spending responsibly, repeal subsidies to Big Oil, adopt the Buffett rule, and preserve the Medicare guarantee for seniors. Rather than pointing fingers, we should be looking at this and other reasonable alternatives that would provide critical relief for working families right now.

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HONORING THE LIFE OF RALPH WALDO ELLISON

(Mr. LANKFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to be able to pay honor to a man who deserves honor. March 1 would have been Ralph Waldo Ellison's—we know him as Ralph Ellison—100th birthday.

Ralph Ellison is a proud son of Oklahoma City. He's a graduate of Douglas High School in Oklahoma City. He hopped trains to Tuskegee to go to Tuskegee College on a music scholarship.

He's a musician, he's a sculptor, and he's the writer of the famous work, "Invisible Man." It was the defining work of African American literature in the 1950s, and still continues today as being one of the defining works to be able to point our culture to not ignore racial injustice, social injustice, and economic injustice that still occurs in our Nation today.

His work ethic, his passion for education, and his passion for justice is a